

Ozone Infrastructure Improvement Fact Sheet

The Milwaukee Water Works is installing valves upstream of the ozone process to facilitate different water flow paths through the treatment process. This will increase the flexibility in operating the plant and add a layer of redundancy, to the benefit of all customers. We needed to temporarily turn off ozone disinfection so workers can install these valves.

We expect to resume ozone treatment at the Linnwood Water Treatment Plant within 12 weeks. We continue to use chlorine disinfection at the plant to meet all water quality regulations. The Howard Avenue Water Treatment Plant continues to use both ozone disinfection and chlorine disinfection.

Possible difference in taste or smell of water

Some customers who use tap water originating from the Linnwood Plant may notice a subtle difference in the taste or smell of their water due to plant growth in the Lake Michigan water that ozone disinfection usually removes. Generally, water from the Linnwood plant is pumped to areas north of State Street.

The likelihood of taste/smell change at this time of year is very slim, but we want to be open in advance with our communications to customers. The informational advisory focuses on taste/smell because we believe treatment is more than adequate. The Lake Michigan source water is of very good quality, and at cold temperatures near 50 degrees F. or lower, there is limited plant growth that can contribute a taste or smell. There is nothing being added to the water, it is just the natural lake taste/smell that ozone removed.

IMPORTANT: The tap water from the Linnwood Treatment Plant is safe to drink and use during the project. The rest of the water treatment system at the Linnwood plant will be fully operational, including chlorine disinfection, which provides effective disinfectant to meet all water quality standards and regulations.

Both ozone and chlorine disinfection will remain in use at the south side Howard Avenue Water Treatment Plant.

Ozone is an extra step used in Milwaukee

While chlorine disinfection assures adequate water quality in distribution systems, the addition of ozone has the added benefit of improving drinking water taste and smell from surface water sources such as Lake Michigan. There are no regulatory requirements that ozone be used in drinking water. We use ozone as an added barrier against illness-causing organisms and harmful contaminant.

The Milwaukee Health Department also makes sure the water is safe to drink and use

The Milwaukee Water Works and the City of Milwaukee Health Department (MHD) monitor drinking water quality to ensure public health and safety. This includes routine review of treatment plant operational data as well as analysis of disease surveillance in the community. Existing MHD recommendations that those who are immunocompromised seek advice from their health care providers remain in effect.

About the Informational Advisory

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Centers for Disease Control, and national drinking water agencies suggest utilities use this type of public advisory for a range of purposes to communicate planned or anticipated changes in water quality – this includes taste and odor. Milwaukee's drinking water will remain in full compliance with EPA and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) clean water requirements.

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